Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Text

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72
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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-15 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 TRSE-00 MBFR-04

SAJ-01 DODE-00 H-03 NSC-10 SS-15 ACDA-19 COA-02 EB-11

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P R 031830Z OCT 73
FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4017
USIA WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO USMISSION NATO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY OSLO
COMICEDEFOR

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 REYKJAVIK 1168

JOINT USIS/EMBASSY MESSAGE

EUR/NE FOR AMBASSADOR IRVING

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR UK IC
SUBJECT: FISHERIES DISPUTE: MEDIA COMMENTARY ON BRITISH WITH-
DRAWAL DECISION

1. SUMMARY: ICELANDIC PRESS OCT 3 IN COMMENTARIES AND INTERVIEWS SUGGESTS REASONS FOR HEATH GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO WITHDRAW FLEET AND TUGBOATS FROM 50 MILE FISHERIES AREA. OPPOSITION MORGUNBLADID SUGGESTS REASON PRINCIPALLY DUE TO ACTION OF NATO ALLIES AND SECGEN. PROGRESSIVE PARTY'S TIMINN SAYS NEITHER BRITISH NOR NATO ACTED UNTIL ICELANDIC DETERMINATION TO BREAK RELATIONS WAS MADE CLEAR. PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE THJODVILJINN SAYS FIRMNESS OF GOI WAS SINGLE REASON FOR BRITISH -RETREAT". NORWEGIAN FONMIN VARVICK'S PLEASURE WITH
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LUNS' ROLE IS PLAYED PROMINENTLY IN MORGUNBLADID: INTERVIEWS

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

WITH POLITICIANS ON BRITISH REASONS PARALLEL THOSE IN THE VARIOUS PARTY NEWSPAPERS. END SUMMARY.

2. REYKJAVIK'S PARTISAN NEWSPAPERS OCT 3 SUGGEST VARYING REASONS FOR THE BRITISH DECISION OCT 1-2 TO WITHDRAW ITS FLEET AND TUGBOATS FROM ICELAND'S UNILATERALLY DECLARED 50-MILE FISHERIES JURISDICTION.

3. MORGUNBLADID, INDEPENDENCE PARTY, SAYS IN EDITORIAL "IT HAS NOW BECOME CLEAR THAT THE ACTIONS OF OUR ALLIES IN NATO HAVE INFLUENCED THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO WITHDRAW THEIR FLEET FROM THE 50 MILES. AS EARLY AS JUNE, DURING THE NATO MINISTERIAL MEETING IN COPENHAGEN, IT BECAME APPARENT THAT WE HAD STRONG SUPPORT FROM OUR NATO ALLIES, AND LATER THAT THEY ALL SUPPORTED US, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE BRITISH, WITH EVEN WEST GERMANY OPPOSED TO THE SHOW OF FORCE.

"SECRETARY GENERAL LUNS HAS BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT IN EXERTING HIS INFLUENCE TO HAVE THE BRITISH WITHDRAW. AS A MATTER OF FACT, HE HAS GONE SO FAR IN HIS ACTIONS AND COMMENTS THAT THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES HAVE SEEN REASON TO PROTEST HIS POSITION.

" THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATO COULD NOT, OF COURSE, HAVE GONE THIS FAR IF HE HAD NOT HAD THE SUPPORT OF THE NATO NATIONS. HE SPEAKS AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NATO NATIONS, NOT AS AN INDIVIDUAL.

"THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY MADE THE INITIAL SUGGESTION THAT THE MATTER BE SUBMITTED TO NATO AND MET THE APPROVAL OF THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT. THE IP ALSO RECOMMENDED THAT THE MATTER BE PUT BEFORE THE U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL, BUT THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT HELD THAT THE MATTER WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATELY HANDLED BY NATO. THIS POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT CERTAINLY WAS A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE FOR NATO AND WE HAVE NOW SEEN THAT OUR ALLIES HAVE NOT DESERTED US. ONE MUST REALIZE THAT NATO CANNOT PASS RESOLUTIONS UNLESS THERE IS UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT, AND THEREFORE COULD ONLY PUT INCREASING PRESSURE ON THE BRITISH."

4. TIMINN, ORGAN OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S AND FOREIGN MINISTER'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY, TAKES A DIFFERENT TACK: "THE DECISION OF THE UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 REYKJA 01168 01 OF 02 031945Z

BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO WITHDRAW CERTAINLY SHOULD BE WELCOMED. HOWEVER, IT DOES NOT CHANGE THE FACT THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS PRESSURED TO DO SO BY THE DETERMINED POSIITION OF THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT TO BREAK OFF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS SHOULD THE FLEET NOT BE WITHDRAWN.

"NO REACTION WAS PROMPTED EITHER BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT NOR THE NATO ALLIANCE UNTIL IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THE ICELANDIC

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

GOVERNMENT WOULD BREAK DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IF THE FLEET WERE NOT WITHDRAWN.

"ALONGSIDE THE WILL TO NEGOTIATE THE GOVERNMENT HAS TO SHOW DETERMINATION. THIS IS BEST DEMONSTRATED BY THE FACT THAT THE MATTER FIRST STARTED MOVING AFTER THE FIRM DECISION OF THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY AT ITS HALLORMSTADUR MEETING (NOTE: WHERE THE PARTY PASSED ITS RESOLUTION TO CONDITIONALLY BREAK DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS). FIRST THEN DID NATO REACT SERIOUSLY AND THE SECRETARY GENERAL COME TO ICELAND AND SUBSEQUENTLY WORK HARD ATD HAVING THE FLEET REMOVED. THIS SHOWS THAT NOTHING WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED UNLESS THE MATTER IS PURSUED WITH DETERMINATION." TIMINN EDITORIAL IS SIGNED BY THORARINN THORARINSSON, EDITOR AND CHAIRMAN OF THE ALTHING'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.

5. THJODVILJINN, ORGAN OF THE FISHERIES MINISTER'S PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE PARTY SAYS: "NO ONE CAN DOUBT THAT IT WAS ONLY THE FIRM DETERMINATION OF THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT AND THE CLEAR THREAT TO CUT DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE BRITISH SHOULD THE FLEET NOT WITHDRAW WHICH MADE THE GOVERNMENT RETREAT FROM THEIR UNTENABLE POSITION.

"IT SHOULD BE UNDERLINED THAT IT HAS BECOME CLEAR THAT THE CONSERVATIVE BRITISH GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES ONLY THE UTMOST FIRMNESS FROM OUR SIDE.

"THE BRITISH THREATEN TO RETURN WITH THEIR FLEET IF ICELANDIC LAW IS ENFORCED WITHIN THE ICELANDIC FISHERIES LIMITS. MR. HEATH SHOULD NOW KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT WE WILL FOLLOW ICELANDIC LAW IN THIS RESPECT--AND NOT DIRECTIONS FROM LONDON OR OTHER HEADQUARTERS OF OUR 'COMRADES IN ARMS' IN NATO."

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PAGE 01 REYKJA 01168 02 OF 02 032104Z

72
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-15 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 TRSE-00 MBFR-04

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Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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P R 031830Z OCT 73
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UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 REYKJAVIK 1168

6. ALTHYDUBLADID, ORGAN OF THE SECOND OPPOSITION PARTY, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, HAS NO EDITORIAL COMMENTARY ON THE WITHDRAWAL OCTOBER 3.

7. IN INTERVIEWS WITH POLITICIANS, MORGUNBLADID QUOTES PRIMIN AS SAYING "WE KNOW THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATO, AND SOME OTHER NATIONS, HAVE SHOWN GREAT INTEREST IN THE PAST FEW DAYS IN PERSUADING THE BRITISH TO WITHDRAW THEIR WARSHIPS FROM WITHIN THE 50-MILES". NO INSTRUCTIONS HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO THE COAST GUARD, HE SAID, TO SHOW RESTRAINT. THE FISHERIES LIMITS WOULD BE DEFENDED IN THE SAME MANNER AS BEFORE. DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WOULD BE BROKEN SHOULD THE BRITISH FLEET RE-ENTER THE 50 MILES.

8. ALSO IN MORGUNBLADID, MINISTER OF FISHERIES LUDVIK JOSEFSSON IS CITED AS SAYING THAT THERE HAVE BEEN SOME CHANGES IN ICELAND'S POSITION, PERHAPS MAKING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE BRITISH MORE DIFFICULT. HE WOULD NOT BE TRAVELLING TO LONDON WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, HE SAID, BUT ANY FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS BELOW THE PRIME
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 REYKJA 01168 02 OF 02 032104Z

MINISTERIAL LEVEL WOULD BE CONDUCTED BY THE SAME ICELANDIC COMMITTEE OF THREE MINISTERS REPRESENTING ALL THREE COALITION PARTIES WHICH RECENTLY NEGOTIATED WITH THE WEST GERMANS.

9. IN THODVILJINN THE MINISTER OF FISHERIES IS CITED AS COMMENTING AS FOLLOWS: (1) BRITISH ARE RETREATING BECAUSE OF THE DETERMINATION OF THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT: (2) THE COAST GUARD HAS INSTRUCTIONS TO DEFEND THE FISHERIES LIMITS WITH FULL FORCE, DESPITE THE BRITISH WARNINGS: (3) THE PRIME MINISTERIAL TALKS WILL BE CONDUCTED ONLY IF THE BRITISH DO NOT RE-ENTER THE LIMITS; (4) THE BRITISH MUST TOTALLY CHANGE THEIR POSITION IF ANY TEMPORARY SOLUTION IS TO BE REACHED. HE SAID BRITISH TRAWL WIRES WILL CONTINUE TO BE CUT AND BRITISH TRAWLERS WILL BE ARRESTED IF POSSIBLE.

10. IN OTHER COMMENTARY, MORGUNBLADID INTERVIEWS MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS BJORN JONSSON (ORGANIZATION OF LIBERALS AND LEFTISTS) AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN GYLFI

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

GISLASON.

11. JONSSON SAYS "I THINK THAT WE HAVE WON CONSIDERABLY, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING. I CANNOT, OF COURSE, PREDICT WHAT LIES AHEAD. BUT TODAY'S DEVELOPMENTS ARE CERTAINLY REMARKABLE." HE SAID HE AGREED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY TO HEATH. ASKED IF HE THOUGHT THAT THE PREVIOUS ICELANDIC OFFERS WOULD BE MADE AGAIN IN NEW NEGOTIATIONS HE DECLINED TO COMMENT, SAYING THE SITUATION HAD CHANGED AND A RE-EVALUATION WAS NOW NECESSARY. HE ADDED THAT HE DID NOT FIND IT APPROPRIATE FOR SINGLE MINISTERS TO COMMENT ON THE ISSUE BEFORE NEGOTIATIONS STARTED.

12. GISLASON SAYS "THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS DECLARED UNANIMOUS SUPPORT FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY ON WHICH THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND THE CABINET HAD ALSO AGREED... I THINK THAT THIS TYPE OF UNITY WILL HELP OUR JUST CAUSE AND HOPE THAT THIS WILL BE A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION IN REACHING A JUST SOLUTION ... I HOPE WE CAN NOW SEE THE END OF THIS DISPUTE... I THINK THE DEVELOPMENTS ARE A GREAT VICTORY FOR ICELAND."

13. ONLY COMMENT FEATURED FROM ABROAD IN OCT 3 PAPERS IN MORGUNBLADID'S PAGE ONE ARTICLE CITING NORWEGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 REYKJA 01168 02 OF 02 032104Z

VARVICK'S STATEMENT OF PLEASURE WITH THE NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND PARTICULAR PLEASURE WITH SECRETARY GENERAL LUNS' ROLE IN BREAKING THE DEADLOCK. THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT, VARVICK SAYS, HAS FOLLOWED THE DEVELOPMENTS WITH GREAT CONCERN AND THE DISPUTE HAS IMPLICATIONS REACHING INTO MANY SPHERES OUTSIDE THAT OF FISHERIES LIMITS.

14. ICELAND'S ONLY PM DAILY, VISIR, INDEPENDENCE PARTY, TITLES ITS OCT 3 EDITORIAL "LUNS DID IT":

"JOSEPH LUNS' INTERVENTION IN THE FISHERIES DISPUTE IS THE CAUSE OF THE SUDDEN TURNABOUT. HIS SUDDEN TRIP TO LONDON OVER THE WEEKEND IS THE HI GH POINT IN HIS ROLE AS A MEDIATOR.

"AT THAT TIME HE WAS SUCCESSFUL IN PERSUADING PRIME MINISTER HEATH TO WITHDRAW THE WARSHIPS AND TUGBOATS.

"LUNS HAS HAD THE SUPPORT OF ALL NATO NATIONS WITH THE EXCEPTION OF GREAT BRITAIN IN HIS ROLE AS MEDIATOR. HE HAS USED ALL OF HIS RESOURCES IN HIS ATTEMPT. FINALLY HE HAD BECOME SO FRUSTRATED WITH THE STUBBORNNESS OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT THAT HE STATED IN LONDON THAT THE GOVERNMENT STOOD IN THE WAY OF CONCILIATION BY NOT WITHDRAWING ITS FLEET.

"THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PAST FEW DAYS HAVE BEEN INTERESTING IN

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

THAT AT TIMES THE ISSUE MIGHT HAVE TURNED INTO AN EVEN GREATER DEADLOCK. WITHOUT LUNS' SUDDEN TRIP AND HIS CONVICTION IN SPEAKING WITH HEATH, DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH BRITAIN WOULD HAVE BEEN BROKEN AND THE PROBLEM WOULD HAVE BECOME MUCH MORE SERIOUS."

15. COMMENT: IN THE WAKE OF WHAT IS REGARDED BY ALL PARTIES AS A NATIONAL VICTORY, EACH PARTY IS EMPHASIZING ITS OWN CONTRIBUTION TO THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS WHICH LED TO BRITISH ANNOUNCEMENT OF OCT. 2. WITH ONE EYE ON THE ICELANDIC DEFENSE FORCE AND NATO MEMBERSHIP, MORGUNBLADID AND VISIR ARE EMPHASIZING NATO'S ROLE IN TURNING LONDON. THJODVILJINN DISMISSES ROLE OF "COMRADES IN ARMS" AND EMPHASIZES ICELANDIC AND GOVERNMENTAL DETERMINATIONM TIMINN GIVES NATO PRESSURE CREDIT, BUT SAYS NEITHER NATO NOR LONDON MOVED UNTIL GOVERNMENT PROCLAIMED PROGRESSIVE PARTY'S RESOLUTIONS TO BREAK RELATIONS. NATO'S IMAGE HERE WILL
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Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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30 JUN 2005

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